



## *Report to the Auburn City Council*

Information Item

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Agenda Item No.

City Manager's Approval

**To:** Mayor and City Council Members  
**From:** Mark D'Ambrogio, Fire Chief  
**Date:** May 9, 2011  
**Subject:** Auburn Municipal Code section 100.87; Fuel Modification Standards, one year report

### **The Issue**

This is a Staff report on Auburn Municipal Code section 100.87; Fuel Modification Standards, of which was changed in May of 2010. No action at this time is being requested or required. This is informational only.

### **Background**

In May of 2010 the Council adopted an Ordinance to amend Auburn Municipal Code (AMC) section 100.87; Fuel Modification Standards, specifically pertaining to "defensible space". The change applies to parcels that are one (1) acre or greater in size to maintain "defensible space" to structures on adjoining parcels when such one (1) acre or greater parcel is within 100 feet of the adjoining structure on the neighboring property. This may be accomplished by the property owner of the one (1) acre or greater in size parcel creating and maintaining the "defensible space" to the neighboring parcel, or through permissions; allowing the neighboring property owner to create and maintain the "defensible space" on the parcel of one (1) acre or greater in size, or a combination of the two. If the property owner of a parcel one (1) acre or greater does not provide the "defensible space" and refuses to grant permissions to the adjoining property owner to create and maintain such "defensible space", such a property owner will be noticed and processed as required to do so. In the event that compliance is not achieved, an "abatement" process will be conducted ultimately resulting in the creation of the "defensible space" and all costs associated will be borne to such non-compliant property owner.

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This report is a one (1) year review of activity pertaining to the AMC section 100.87 change, as requested by the Council.

### **Review of Activities**

A total of 123 parcels were initially noticed for either weed abatement or defensible space compliance. In addition, a large number of property owners cleared their lands of annual weeds and or created and maintained “defensible space” without any notice.

Of the initial notices, the following were outcomes specific to the AMC section 100.87 change pertaining to “defensible space”:

Two (2) noticed property owners completed work on their properties;

Two (2) noticed property owners conducted a collaborative effort where neighboring property owners assisted in fuels treatment;

One (1) noticed property was abated through due process concurrently for “weed abatement” and “defensible space”;

Two (2) property owners were not noticed but did seek assistance from the fire department to conduct fuels treatment on each other’s properties; and

Two (2) properties were not noticed but did seek assistance from the fire department to conduct additional fuels treatment on neighboring properties but were less than 1 acre in size where the Ordinance did not apply.

### **Summary**

The change in AMC section 100.87 provided an additional tool for the fire department in securing “defensible space” through abatement. The most success was the ability of the fire department to assist adjoining property owners in “working” together to achieve desired outcomes. Although there is a time commitment of fire department staff to work with property owners, the long term effect of cooperation between property owners is what will achieve success. This will prove to be more efficient than conducting the abatement process of which also takes great deal of staff resources to conduct.